Issue No.3



A VISION OF A CONNECTED CHURCH Administrative Bishop

HOW TO MEASURE CHURCH GROWTH

**#LEADING LAITY**Shine where you're placed

Womb Man

CELEBRATING WOMEN LEADERS

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**SELF LEADERSHIP**THROUGH THE LIFE
OF JESUS

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# AIMS & OBJECTIVES

A Relevant, Relational Church, Reimagining God at work, in our communities and nation.

**CONNECT** is a quarterly publication from the Office of the Administrative Bishop. This will be published digitally and posted on our website for your viewing.

Please click **HERE** to subscribe.



- Encouraging Spiritual Growth: Helping each other grow in faith through prayer, sharing the Word, and church activities.
- Improving Communication: Keeping members directly updated about church activities, decisions and personnel changes, so that you are informed about your church.
- Building Community: Strengthening connections between members through this medium.
- Supporting Each Other: Encouraging involvement in and keeping you informed about local and national events.
- Celebrating Together: Recognising and celebrating important moments in the lives of our ministers and members to uplift and encourage each other.

# Editor's Note



Mrs Nastassia Holness Commissioning Editor

Dear Reader,

I hope you enjoy reading Issue 3 of the NTCG National Connect Magazine; the aim is to Connect members of the New Testament Church of God to its leadership and to each other.

This edition features our Administrative Bishop's vision of a connected church. Rev. Lymano Wishart gives insight on Self-Leadership Through the Life of Jesus, and Dr Grace Bally-Balogun explore ways to measure church growth.

Join us as we honour women leaders in the New Testament Church of God. In this issue, we joyfully celebrate Rev. Bridgett Brooks, Senior Pastor of NTCG Hitchin.

As with every issue of the Connect Magazine, we hope you will be inspired and motivated to continue connecting with your church and community.

Enjoy!

## **Editorial support required**

We're looking for volunteers with proofreading experience and an eye for detail. If you are interested, please email: Nastassia.holness@ntcg.org.uk



# Take time to reflect

#Inspiration
#StayMotivated



7

**Nastassia Holness** 

**Commissioning Editor** 



**MESSAGE** 



MESSAGE

now

Topic: The Heart of a Leader

Scripture: John 13:15 - I have set you an example that you should do

as I have done for you.

Imagine if you lived 2000 years ago and had to put money down on who would have more lasting influence, the Roman Empire, which controlled the whole world at that time or a Jewish carpenter with 12 inexperienced followers. Who would you choose? Most, if not all people would choose the Roman Empire. Yet today the whole world considers this year to be 2025, because it's 2,025 years since the birth of the same man, Jesus. You can put two of the most celebrated festivals in the mix, Christmas and Easter, the celebration of the life, death and resurrection of that same person, Jesus. And lastly, from John to Martha, people still name their kids after the followers of Jesus. While names like Nero and Caesar are names for pets and salads. So, touch down, we can all agree that no one has influenced the entire world like Jesus has. Therefore, when discussing what good leadership looks like, we must continue connecting to the Jesus model. So then, what was so different about Jesus' model of Leadership?

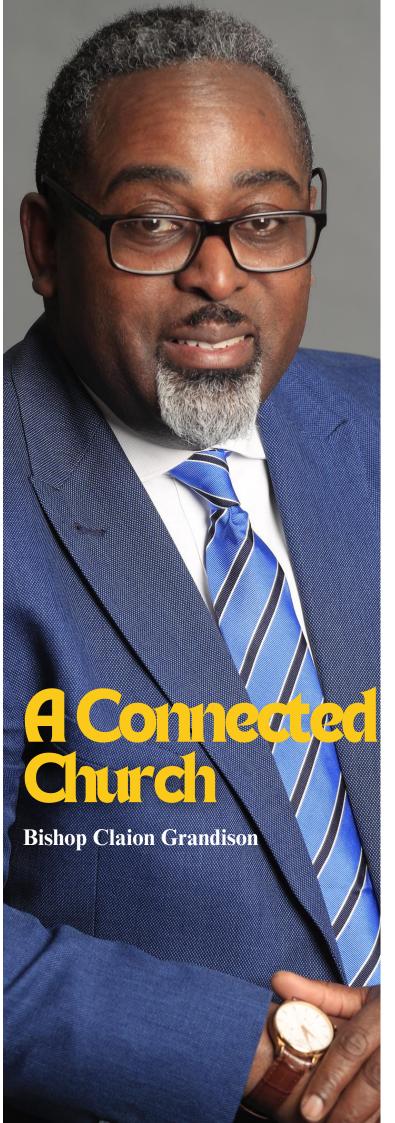
#### The Jesus Paradox

Let us look at the farewell discourse in John 13, Jesus' message to his disciples during the Last Supper was quite a paradox. Taking on the role of a common servant, he knelt to wash the feet of his disciples. This act is somewhat unheard of in that culture, a Rabbie would never be seen doing such a thing. Yet, Jesus did this to symbolise his purpose, revealing the true nature of God, a being of sacrificial love, demonstrated through laying down his life for the sins of the world. Jesus' model of leadership focuses on developing character rather than status or any other techniques or methods. This new idea was quite the opposite of the Roman world that best served the one or few at the top. This new idea completely flipped the switch. The pyramid structure as we know it, turned upside down. Leadership and servitude intermarry, now, the higher we go, the more we are to serve. And in doing so, the more of him we come to know, and the less of ourselves we become.

#### Conclusion

The world is in dire need of leadership; how will the church continue to leave a lasting influence? When serving becomes the most desired position. So then, what does foot washing look like in your workplaces, families, neighbourhood or schools? This is what will ultimately show the world who God is.







#### A vision of a connected church.

In John 13:35, Jesus said, "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." So then, how do we live out love? One of the ways to better explain how to connect effectively is to dive into the fascinating world of our aquatic friends to uncover the mysteries of how fish connect.

Fish have four distinctive ways of connecting. The first one is through language, the language of colours and patterns, used to either attract a mate or warn off enemies. The second way of connecting is through their coordinated dance, used to guide fellow fish to food sources. The third way of connecting is through sound, their way of communicating critical messages, especially in environments where visibility is limited. Fourthly, fish use electronic energy to give off certain energy through vibrations and chemical reactions, used for identifying each other, navigation, and to identify danger.

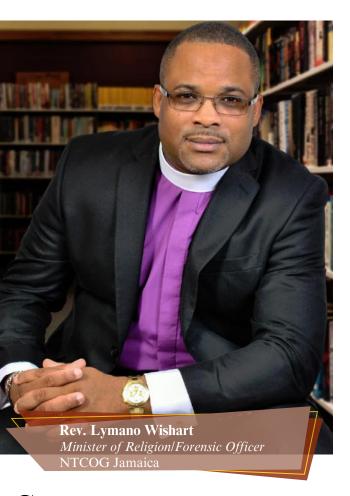
So then, similar to fish, what does our colour say about our church? Is our branding attracting or detracting? Our behaviour speaks volumes, louder than any branding. The message that we send out cannot just be fancy, high-tech, or digital, but genuine, relevant and theologically sound. This is what will connect us to each other, and connects those looking in.

#### 7 Ways to connect

- 1. Regional connect hubs
- 2. Connect Sundays ( A time to connect to families and communities)
- 3. Connect convention
- 4. Connect relationships
- 5. Cultural connect
- 6. Sunday school connect
- 7. Half term breaks & summer connect

Send in your ideas on how your church is connecting: Connect@ntcg.org.uk.

# Self Leadership Through the Life of Jesus



Self-leadership is the foundation of personal excellence, requiring discipline, vision, and an unwavering commitment to values. Neck, Manz, and Houghton, in Self-Leadership: The Definitive Guide to Personal Excellence, emphasize that effective leadership begins with leading oneself. Similarly, Ross, in The Road to Self-Leadership, highlights the necessity of stepping out of one's comfort zone to grow, while Soul Strength underscores the rhythms of inner renewal necessary for resilience. Jesus Christ embodies the ultimate model of self-leadership, displaying personal mastery, discipline, and a mission-driven life that inspires transformational leadership.

Jesus' leadership was deeply rooted in purpose. From the onset of His ministry, He articulated His mission: "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10).

His unwavering focus on fulfilling God's will mirrors the self-leadership principle of setting a clear and compelling vision. Self-leadership demands that individuals define their purpose and align their daily actions accordingly, just as Jesus consistently sought the Father's will above all else (John 5:30). This clarity of purpose was accompanied by extraordinary discipline. He fasted for forty days in the wilderness, resisting temptation (Matthew 4:1-11), demonstrating the ability to govern His desires and remain true to His higher calling. This aligns with Self-Leadership: The Definitive Guide to Personal Excellence, which highlights self-regulation as a crucial skill. Jesus' ability to restrain Himself in challenging situations—whether responding to opposition or enduring the cross—showcases the inner strength that self-leadership cultivates.

Ross' The Road to Self-Leadership underscores that growth happens outside one's comfort zone. Jesus frequently led His disciples into situations that challenged societal norms and personal fears—walking on water, engaging with outcasts, and confronting religious authorities. His leadership was never about ease but about impact, urging His followers to embrace personal transformation and boldness. Yet, even amid His demanding mission, Jesus understood the need for solitude and renewal, often withdrawing to pray (Luke 5:16). Soul Strength emphasizes that thriving leaders establish rhythms of rest and reflection. Jesus' ability to sustain His calling came from His intentional time with the Father, teaching that self-leadership involves spiritual and emotional replenishment to maintain long-term effectiveness.

A true self-leader is not self-serving but mission-driven. Jesus declared, "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve" (Matthew 20:28). His leadership was not about dominance but about empowering others. He washed His disciples' feet, modelling humility and showing that self-leadership is ultimately about influencing others for good. His example teaches us that leading oneself well means having the strength to lead others with humility and purpose.

Jesus exemplifies self-leadership in its highest form—rooted in purpose, sustained by discipline, willing to embrace challenge, and anchored in renewal. To follow in His footsteps, we must cultivate clarity of vision, develop discipline in our daily walk, and step boldly into growth. Just as Jesus prioritized time with the Father, we too must embrace moments of renewal to maintain our strength. Self-leadership is not merely about personal success; it is about becoming individuals who can inspire and transform others. By leading ourselves well, we align with God's purpose, impact those around us, and walk the path that Jesus set before us.



## Hi, I'm Carl Shirley

The Word of God is my foundation at work and in life, guiding my actions, decisions, and interactions. Proverbs 3:5-6 (KJV) says, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

This truth keeps me grounded in integrity, patience, and wisdom, even in challenges. It strengthens my work ethic, reminding me that excellence honours God. In my personal life, it brings peace, purpose, and resilience. His Word is my compass, ensuring I walk in faith, love, and unwavering confidence daily.



## **#LEADING-LATY**

We are strategically placed within our workplace, family, community, school, neighbourhood and university to implement the Great Commission. Where you are isn't coincidental, but God-incidental, to shine where you're placed. Therefore, if you are a parent, nurse, train driver, or whatever role or responsibility you assumed, let your light shine to glorify your Father in heaven. Join us as we celebrate our Leading Laity.



## Hi, J'm Vivette Bah

The word of God has been my life's foundation. I am confident in God's word that I am the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 5-21). I am not saved by my works, but by grace through faith.

I am able to live a victorious life by depending on the word of God in my daily life, this is where I find comfort, peace, joy and contentment.

At work, I am committed to giving my best, as the word of God reminds me that whatever I do, I am to do it heartily as unto the Lord (Colossians 3-23). I need to always be an example to the word of God, that reminds me that I am the salt and light.

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"SHE SPEAKS WITH WISDOM, AND FAITHFUL INSTRUCTION IS ON HER TONGUE".

PROVERBS 31:26



THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF GOD IN ENGLAND AND WALES, JOYFULLY CELEBRATE

your faith, leadership and compassion have guided many. We are deeply grateful for your tireless service and dedication. Rev. Bridgette Brooks is the Senior Pastor at the New Testament Church of God in Hitchin. A thriving, vibrant community-led church whose vision is "Compassion in Action". Bridgette has been married to her beloved husband, Garrett Brooks, for almost 36 years and they have 5 beautiful adult children, Wayne, Garrett, Alexzina, Angelica and Akua.

Bridgette has been a civil servant since 1988, she has had a few positions, mainly policy adviser and technical specialist. She was involved with the implementation of Part V of the Police Act 1997 and the disclosure of information from police records under the Data Protection Act 1998. Now known as Disclosure and Barring Service. Bridgette was also privileged to have one-to-one briefings with the Secretary of State and attend the House of Commons to provide policy advice to ministers.

Born in the borough of Lambeth, London, to Leeburn and Annetta Minott, Bridgette has had her fair share of setbacks, however, her early years' experience helped shape her character and develop her resilience and trust in God.



Her ministry and

leadership experience covers many areas of church ministry including introducing the Freedom in Christ Discipleship course, and the Pastoral Care Ministry Team whilst cultivating close relationships with many families and organisations.

Bridgette's family is dear to her, she appreciates their love and support, they are an integral part of her ministry journey and strongly believes her life is enriched with them in it. She is also grateful to all the ministers who pastored and mentored her, spiritual fathers, mothers, sisters and brothers, she will always be grateful for having all of them in her life.

Bridgette, may the Almighty God continue to bless you with strength, vitality, and joy.



## HOW TO MEASURE CHURCH GROWTH: A FRAMEWORK FOR CHURCH LEADERS

## "CHURCH GROWTH IS NOT JUST ABOUT NUMBERS"

Understanding church growth begins with asking the right questions. To do that, we can resort to strong Christian tools. George Bullard's research on congregational life cycles (2001) provides a valuable framework for assessing church health and revitalization. By identifying key organizing principles and recognizing where a congregation stands in its life cycle, church leaders, Bullard states, can take intentional steps to foster renewal and growth.

Dr Grace Bally-Balogun

NTCG National Growth & Church Planting Lead



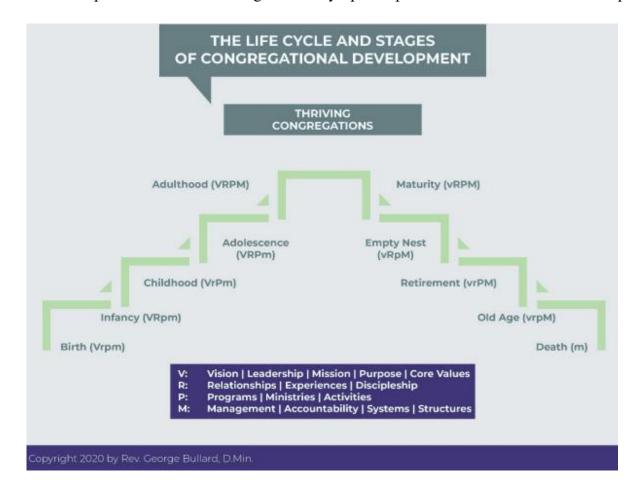
## IDENTIFYING YOUR CHURCH'S LIFE CYCLE STAGE

Every congregation has a life cycle into which the four organizing principles fit. In his model (see diagram), Bullard shows churches go through predictable stages of growth and decline. Understanding these stages helps leaders take proactive steps to sustain or revitalize their congregation.

- Birth (Vrpm) A vision-driven beginning with minimal structure.
- Infancy (VRpm) Strong vision and relationships, but limited programs.
- Childhood (VrPm) Growth in programs, often at the expense of relational depth.
- Adolescence (VRPm) A return to balancing vision, relationships, and programs.
- Adulthood (VRPM) A thriving, balanced congregation with strong synergy.

- Maturity (vRPM) Vision wanes; management takes the lead.
- Empty Nest (vRpM) Program quality declines; traditions dominate.
- Retirement (vrPM) Management-heavy, with minimal vision or relationship-building.
- Old Age (vrpM) Survival mode (can do so for many years) with little growth potential unless revitalized.
- Death (m) –Congregation ceases to exist as a community of worship, but possibility of Birth because as Bullard says, "at death, there can be a resurrection".

Churches naturally cycle through these stages, but renewal is always possible. Even congregations in Old Age or Death can experience new life through the Holy Spirit's power and intentional leadership.



## KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR GROWTH

## FIVE WAYS TO MEASURE CHURCH GROWTH

- Growth is most dynamic in the early stages; revitalization requires intentional energy and leadership.
- Many congregations do not fit these stages perfectly but can identify dominant characteristics.
- Congregations in decline must be willing to embrace change within 1–5 years for effective renewal.
- Churches at their peak (Adulthood) must initiate a new life cycle within 3–5 years to avoid decline.
- External support from training partnerships or mentoring/resource churches (within or outside the district) can accelerate revitalization.

- Evaluate the Status of the Four Organizing Principles – Is Vision leading, or has Management taken over?
- Determine Your Congregation's Life Cycle Stage – Recognizing the current phase enables strategic planning.
- Create a New Life Cycle Proactively introduce fresh vision, relationships, and programs before decline sets in.
- Be Open to the Holy Spirit's Move Growth is not solely a strategic process; divine intervention plays a key role.
- Contextualize the Model for Your Church Apply these insights within your unique cultural and congregational setting.

## **FINAL THOUGHTS**

Church growth is not just about numbers—it's about vitality, mission, and sustained impact. Vision and relationships propel congregations forward. As leaders, continually assess your church's stage and be prepared to make necessary changes. Growth is possible at any stage when faith, leadership, and community engagement work together under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.



**Dr Grace Bally-Balogun** NTCG National Growth & Church Planting Lead







A commitment to ongoing lifelong learning



The Continuous Professional Development Programme supports all ministers and employees of the New Testament Church of God.

The CPD initiative has been carefully designed to support your ongoing growth, strengthen ministry effectiveness, and align with our commitment to excellence in service.

#### How CPD Supports the Appraisal System:

Providing structured learning opportunities that contribute to your personal, theological, and professional development.

- Ensuring that training is relevant and targeted to support your ministry roles and responsibilities.
- Recognising and tracking development progress, which will form an integral part of performance reviews and future leadership opportunities.
- Encouraging lifelong learning and the continuous strengthening of our collective ministry impact.

#### How will it be accessed?

Most CPD courses will be accessible online through the Leadership Training Centre.

## How to sign up?

Recommendation through the local church.

#### **Courses Include:**

- Safeguarding
- Cyber Security
- Communication Skills
- Organisational Skills

SCAN ME



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## WE LOVE BECAUSE HE FIRST LOVED US

Take part in a global community of Jesus followers, united to share God's love

**TALK WITH US** 





## SUPPORT MISSION WORKERS

OPERATION MOBILISATION (OM UK)

"Everyone deserves the opportunity to hear the good news of Jesus. Help us take the gospel to the least-reached".

Operation Mobilisation (OM) is a mission organisation dedicated to reaching the least-reached with the gospel. When OM speaks of "least reached," we mean communities where:

- a) there has been no gospel engagement, or
- b) there's been engagement, but no one is proclaiming the good news, or
- c) there's a community of Jesus followers, but access to them is limited by cultural, linguistic, or geographic barriers.

#### Here are 5 ways your church can partner with OM:

## 1 Book an OM speaker.

Invite an OM speaker to your church. Our speakers are people who have lived and worked with OM teams worldwide. They come together to share their experiences, offering unique insights into mission life and how God is at work in hard-to-reach places. uk.om.org/om-speakers

## 2 Host an OM Global Prayer Meeting.

We host a global prayer meeting once a month to create space for community, online or in person. OM is an international family, operating in over 147 countries. This is a great way to get plugged in to what we're doing and the impact that God is making around the world through news, updates, prayer requests and more. Join us—book your free place here: uk.om.org/events

#### **3** Give financially.

OM serves God's mission by mobilising and equipping the Church to see vibrant communities of Jesus followers among the least-reached. This work is possible because of the generosity of the Body of Christ. As your church likely knows, we too rely on financial support. uk.om.org/give

## 4 Send someone from your church & support them.

Have you ever experienced mission overseas before? In OM, we have short and long-term outreaches happening all over the globe every year, from trekking in the Himalayas to interrailing around Europe sharing the gospel on the streets. Whatever experience, whatever age. uk.om.org/go

## 5 Group outreach.

Want to go on an outreach? Why don't you go with others in your church too? OM fields love welcoming teams who serve together, supporting local communities. Have a youth group in your church? You can bring your teens with you too! There is a place for everyone. uk.om.org/shorts

As one church, united in Christ, we are called to share the gospel with all nations. Together, we can spread His love and salvation to every corner of the world. To find out more about OM, you can visit our website on uk.om.org

Ellie Coxall Marketing Officer (OM)



NTCG BIBLE IN A YEAR CHALLENGE

## Devoted

30 - Exodus 17-20



Most Christians never completely read the whole Bible. Many people start reading the Bible but then become overwhelmed by the number of chapters (1,189) and verses (31,102) there are. What we don't realize is that we can read the Bible in a year by reading fewer than four chapters a day. By dividing the Bible into 365 daily readings, your goal of reading the Bible in a year can easily be accomplished, so let us

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do this together! Click here to read Bible Society's online bible.			
January 2025	February 2025	March 2025	April 2025
□ 1 - Genesis 1-3 □ 2 - Joshua 1-5 □ 3 - Psalms 1-2 □ 4 - Job 1-2 □ 5 - Isaiah 1-6 □ 6 - Matthew 1-2 □ 7 - Romans 1-2 □ 8 - Genesis 4-7 □ 9 - Joshua 6-10 □ 10 - Psalms 3-5 □ 11 - Job 3-4 □ 12 - Isaiah 7-11 □ 13 - Matthew 3-4 □ 14 - Romans 3-4 □ 15 - Genesis 8-11 □ 16 - Joshua 11-15 □ 17 - Psalms 6-8 □ 18 - Job 5-6 □ 19 - Isaiah 12-17 □ 20 - Matthew 5-7 □ 21 - Romans 5-6 □ 22 - Genesis 12-15 □ 23 - Joshua 16-20 □ 24 - Psalms 9-11 □ 25 - Job 7-8 □ 26 - Isaiah 18-22 □ 27 - Matthew 8-10 □ 28 - Romans 7-8 □ 29 - Genesis 16-19 □ 30 - Joshua 21-24	□ 1 - Job 9-10 □ 2 - Isaiah 23-28 □ 3 - Matthew 11-13 □ 4 - Romans 9-10 □ 5 - Genesis 20-23 □ 6 - Judges 1-6 □ 7 - Psalms 15-17 □ 8 - Job 11-12 □ 9 - Isaiah 29-33 □ 10 - Matthew 14-16 □ 11 - Romans 11-12 □ 12 - Genesis 24-27 □ 13 - Judges 7-11 □ 14 - Psalms 18-20 □ 15 - Job 13-14 □ 16 - Isaiah 34-39 □ 17 - Matthew 17-19 □ 18 - Romans 13-14 □ 19 - Genesis 28-31 □ 20 - Judges 12-16 □ 21 - Psalms 21-23 □ 22 - Job 15-16 □ 23 - Isaiah 40-44 □ 24 - Matthew 20-22 □ 25 - Romans 15-16 □ 26 - Genesis 32-35 □ 27 - Judges 17-21 □ 28 - Psalms 24-26	□ 1 - Job 17-18 □ 2 - Isaiah 45-50 □ 3 - Matthew 23-25 □ 4 - I Corinthians 1-2 □ 5 - Genesis 36-39 □ 6 - Ruth □ 7 - Psalms 27-29 □ 8 - Job 19-20 □ 9 - Isaiah 51-55 □ 10 - Matthew 26-28 □ 11 - I Corinthians 3-4 □ 12 - Genesis 40-43 □ 13 - I Samuel 1-5 □ 14 - Psalms 30-32 □ 15 - Job 21-22 □ 16 - Isaiah 56-61 □ 17 - Mark 1-2 □ 18 - I Corinthians 5-6 □ 19 - Genesis 44-47 □ 20 - I Samuel 6-10 □ 21 - Psalms 33-35 □ 22 - Job 23-24 □ 23 - Isaiah 62-66 □ 24 - Mark 3-4 □ 25 - I Corinthians 7-8 □ 26 - Genesis 48-50 □ 27 - I Samuel 11-15 □ 28 - Psalms 36-38 □ 29 - Job 25-26 □ 30 - Jeremiah 1-6	□ 1 - I Corinthians 9-10 □ 2 - Exodus 1-4 □ 3 - I Samuel 16-20 □ 4 - Psalms 39-41 □ 5 - Job 27-28 □ 6 - Jeremiah 7-11 □ 7 - Mark 7-8 □ 8 - I Corinthians 11-12 □ 9 - Exodus 5-8 □ 10 - I Samuel 21-25 □ 11 - Psalms 42-44 □ 12 - Job 29-30 □ 13 - Jeremiah 12-16 □ 14 - Mark 9-10 □ 15 - I Corinthians 13-14 □ 16 - Exodus 9-12 □ 17 - I Samuel 26-31 □ 18 - Psalms 45-47 □ 19 - Job 31-32 □ 20 - Jeremiah 17-21 □ 21 - Mark 11-12 □ 22 - I Corinthians 15-16 □ 23 - Exodus 13-16 □ 24 - II Samuel 1-4 □ 25 - Psalms 48-50 □ 26 - Job 33-34 □ 27 - Jeremiah 22-26 □ 28 - Mark 13-14 □ 29 - II Corinthians 1-3

31 - Mark 5-6

The reading plan from May to August will be featured in the next issue.

□ 31 - Psalms 12-14

## CHURCH LIXS

www.ntcg.org.uk/connect | contact@ntcg.org.uk

Connecting members of the New Testament Church of God to its leadership and to each other.







